



**December 15, 2008**

### **Senate approves legislation to help homeowners with energy costs**

Home improvements for increased energy efficiency would be added to the list of approved purposes for Michigan Individual Development Accounts under legislation passed by the Senate.

Currently, the IDA program gives low-income earners an opportunity to save for the first-time purchase of a home, continuing their education, or for business start-ups. The program also allows them to receive matching funds from public or private sources.

Under Senate Bill 1635, qualified home improvements would include the purchase and installation of any qualified energy star product intended for residential or noncommercial use, such as windows, doors, insulation, high efficiency heating and cooling equipment, and any appliances such as dishwashers, clothes washers and refrigerators.

SB 1635 now advances to the House of Representatives for consideration.

### **Package to streamline Friend of the Court approved by the Senate**

Legislation designed to streamline the procedures and improve efficiency of the Friend of the Court was approved recently by the Michigan Senate.

Senate members worked closely on Senate Bills 1423 through 1431 with Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan, the Michigan Department of Human Services, the FOC Association, and the State Court Administrative Office.

Measures in the legislative package will:

- Simplify payment plan requirements for past due child support to afford judicial discretion on a case-by-case basis;
- Permit law enforcement agencies to "boot" vehicles of individuals behind on child support;
- Streamline the license suspension process if past due child support is owed;
- Eliminate the automatic application of surcharge assessments on arrearages; and
- Allow the court to order a jail alternative program for non-payment of child support.

Alternative examples include participation in a parenting program, drug or alcohol counseling, continuing compliance with a current support or parenting time order, or complying with a payment plan.

A comprehensive report with recommendations for improving efficiency and client services was submitted to the governor, the Michigan Supreme Court chief justice and legislative leadership in October 2006.

The nine-bill package now advances to the House of Representatives for consideration.

### **Senate passes bill designed to deal with Michigan road authorities**

Legislation approved by the Senate would examine how much of the state's 39,700-mile federal-aid-eligible road system should be under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

MDOT is responsible for just 8 percent of state roads, ranking Michigan 48th in the nation in the percentage of roads under state jurisdiction. In contrast, counties have jurisdiction over 88,200 miles of roads and cities have jurisdiction over 20,300 miles.

Senate Bill 1318 creates a task force to investigate the transfer of road authority from one jurisdiction to another.

The bill has been sent to the House for further consideration.

### **Contact information**

*Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future legislative updates via e-mail, or have any questions or concerns, please contact my office at [sen22@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:sen22@senate.michigan.gov)*

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